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THE HOLY BROTHERHOOD

THE YEZIDI RELIGIOUS INSTITUTION

OF THE “BROTHER” AND THE “SISTER” OF THE “NEXT WORLD”

GARNIK ASATRIAN

Yerevan

*Alexan Khachatryan -
in Memoriam*

The Yezidis are evidently one of the most mysterious peoples of the world or, at least, of our region. And this is, of course, due to their religion - an ideology which is an admixture of Islamic, Christian and local indigenous elements with an eccentric dogmatic system and cultic practice. The Yezidi religion is an esoteric faith, and the Yezidis are a closed society having an elaborate and intricate system of social relations, various prohibitions between commoners and spiritual castes, between members of the society and aliens, strict endogamy in its classic manifestation, restrictions of the matrimonial ties, sometimes even within the same caste, etc.

The Yezidi society has three basic castes: the highest religious elite, *sheikhs* (šēx, Arab. šayx), *pirs* (p’īr, Persian pīr “old man, saint, priest”) and laymen, *murids* (mīrīd, Arab. murīd “disciple”). Each of the spiritual castes is divided into several endogamous clans and subdivisions.

The closeness of the Yezidis’ life, their strange religious dogmas and practices are the main reason why they have always been the subject of various derogatory characteristics as, e.g., “devil worshippers”, “idolaters”, etc.

The article below is dedicated to an intimate Yezidi religious institution with a dramatic name: the “Brother” and the “Sister” of the “Next World” (birē axiratē and xūškā, or xwāyīngā, āxiratē, or yārē/a āxiratē, Arab. اخ و اخت الاخرة). It is based mainly on my own field materials, collected among the Yezidis of Armenia in recent years.

This important institution having a considerable role in the social and spiritual life of the Yezidis, as far as I know, has never been the object of special research. In the literature dedicated to the Yezidis one can find only some sporadic, mostly indirect indications on this subject.¹ Th. Menzel, for instance, in his summarizing article in the Encyclopaedia of Islam mentioned it *inter alia*, only in some lines.²

R. Lescot, E. Drower, C.J. Edmonds and, most recently, Ph. Kreyenbroek also discussed some aspects of this institution but again in very concise terms.³ This circumstance can be explained by the fact, that the information about this institution is scant and contradictory and, at the same time, there are vague ideas about it among the Yezidis themselves too; even the clerics give sometimes very controversial interpretations on this subject.

The main content and functions of the religious institution of the “Brother” and the “Sister” of the “Next World”, according to the reports of the informants, include the following data.⁴

The “Brother” and the “Sister” are the intercessors in the “Next World” before

Sheikh Adi⁵ for their murids on the Day of Resurrection or just after death, when they are going to account for their deeds. But before their duties, on the Salāt (Arab. Širāt) bridge (the bridge across Gehenna may be crossed only by the pious),⁶ the “Brother” and the “Sister” inquire about the moral purity (from the Yezidi viewpoint)⁷ of their murids, asking them three questions: 1) if they disturbed the caste boundary, i.e. married a representative of a spiritual caste - **dūri dīskā danē?** 2) if they fornicated, getting married with an adherent of a different faith - **dūri ži dalingā šin?**⁸ 3) if they remained followers of the Yezidi faith - **barxe Silt’an Ezidī?** The “Brother” and the “Sister” must get positive answers to these questions with the following formulas: 1) **dūrim dīskā danē** (literally: I am far from mixing, i.e. from marriage with the representative of another caste; 2) **dūrim dalingā šin** (literally: I am far from fornication, i.e. from marriage with the heterodox; 3) **vē dinē, wē dinē barxe Silt’an Ezidim** (literally: In this world and in the “Next World” I’m a lamb of Sultan Yezid,⁹ i.e. a follower of his faith). In the case of the positive result of the inquiry, the murid, following the “Brother” or the “Sister”, according to his/her sex, crosses the Salāt bridge. Before the entrance to paradise the “Brother” or the “Sister” appeals to Sheikh Adi with the intercession permitting their murids to enter paradise:

Šex Adī, tu şahidā bī,
 Šex Adī, tu p’adšayī,
 P’adšayē qadīmīyēyi erhedeyī,
 Aw silāmata, bē lakāya;
 Bira hara jīnatē.

*Sheikh Adi, be a witness,
 Sheikh Adi, you are a king,
 You are Lord, ancient and primordial,
 He (she) - is sound, flawless.
 Let him (her) enter paradise.*

The negative answer to even one of the directed questions causes the immediate refusal of entry into paradise.

Each Yezidi is obliged to have, respectively, a “Brother” or a “Sister” only from the caste of the sheikhs. This choice is hereditary, i.e. the obligation to choose a “Brother” or “Sister” from a given family of the sheikhs moves from father to son and from mother to daughter. In fact, a certain family of sheikhs deals with a certain family of laymen. Such a distribution is intended, likely, to distribute evenly the number of sheikhs among the lay people and thereby to provide a stable income for them, as the sheikh of a family as well as “Brother” and “Sister” must be given regularly offerings of money, help and services from their murids. Originally, perhaps, the murid had chosen the “Brother” or the “Sister” by himself.

As the “Brother” and the “Sister” are close friends of the family, they often are considered to be the “Brother” or the “Sister” for the members of the opposite sex in the family as well. Such a phenomenon creates sometimes a wrong impression that every Yezidi, ignoring his/her sex, has both a “Brother” and a “Sister”.

According to some Yezidi sheikhs in Armenia (e.g. Sheikh Hasane Mamud),

although to have a “Sister” for men and “Brother” for women is not obligatory, nevertheless they can choose them, if they want, after reaching puberty. At the same time, they say, women are free to change their “Sister” inherited from their mothers. What is a constant value is the “Brother”, who can never be changed. Every male Yezidi is obliged to preserve the adherence to a certain sheikhy family as an irrevocable reality, while, they believe, that the distribution of the “Brothers” for every Yezidi family was established by Sheikh Adi himself at “the very beginning” - in the time of **h’ad ū sad**.

So, they implicitly consider “Brotherhood” as a basic ground for the whole institution, regarding the “Sisterhood” as a secondary phenomenon, a complementary detail for the sake of symmetry to the “Brotherhood of the Next World”. In any case there is a special ritual for choosing “Sisters” for men and “Brothers” for women.

First of all, the choice will be **bi huvē** (Arab. **ḥubb**), i.e. “by love, sympathy”. It means that a person is free to choose his (or her) spiritual counterpart and it will be without anyone’s interference, just by his (or her) will.

The “Brother” should be from a sheikhy family but the “Sister” can belong also to the caste of **p’irs**.

During the ceremony, beside the members of the family and the candidate for “Brotherhood” or “Sisterhood”, they invite a sheikh who performs the ritual.

The counterparts stand near the **stēr**¹⁰, opposite to each other, taking in two hands the **xarqa**¹¹ under which they put a cup of water. In this position the sheikh asks the woman who wants to acquire a “Brother” or to change her “Sister”, or the man who acquires a “Sister”: **Tu da’wā ċi dikī?** - “What do you want?”. He (she) answers: **Az da’wā birātīyē (xūškīyē) dikim** - “I am striving to have a “Brother” (“Sister”)”. Then he asks the candidate: **Ta dā** - “Do you agree?”¹² (literally: “Have you given (the word)?”). The candidate answers: **Min dā** - “Yes!” (lit.: “I have given (the word)”). After that, the sheikh reads the following admonition to the partners:

Sē harfa hūn na havalē havin:

Darbā xarqa,

Šarpikā zēīn,

Diskā danē.

In three things you are not responsible for each other.¹³

(In) insulting a spiritual caste,¹⁴

(In marrying) spiritual people,¹⁵

(In marrying) clerics.¹⁶

And then he offers the cup of water for them to drink.

The ceremony is closed with the recitation of a special **qawl**,¹⁷ called **talqīn** (“instruction, exhortation”) by the sheikh:

Salām a’lē,

Nāzil a’lē,

Ĵinat - minat,

Ĵinat - bi nūr;

Qawilē xwadē daya rasul.

Talqînê dixûnim,
Dangê xwa hiltînim.
Way bilâ, way bilâ,
Faqrô, similâ.
Rôza a'rafatê, şarafatê,
Sar p'irâ Salâtê
Am girtin şex, p'îr, hōstâ,
marhavî, yâr-birê âxiratê.
Kaniyâ sipî qulbava,
Xarqê Şixadî şa'dava,
Dast-dâmanê ma har pênj t'irêqê ma hava!

*"Peace upon you,
(May) God descended (upon us),
Thanks for paradise,¹⁸
Paradise of light;
God gave the Qawl¹⁹ to the Prophet.²⁰
I read the talqîn,
I raise my voice.
O God, O God,²¹
O Sheikh Adi,²² in the Name of God,²³
At the Day of Resurrection,²⁴
On the bridge of Şirât
We followed (our) sheikh, p'îr, hōstâ,
marhavî (and) the "Brother" of the "Next World".²⁵
(May) The White spring be the qibla²⁶,
(And) the xarqa of Sheikh Adi be witness,
(That) we will follow our five spiritual leaders".²⁷*

It also must be noticed that the "Brother", as a man, naturally plays a greater role in the life of his murids' family than the "Sister". A pious Yezidi, if it is possible for him, every morning must visit his "Brother" or "Sister" and kiss their hands. Buying or sewing a shirt (kîrâs), a Yezidi must bring it to the "Brother" or the "Sister", so that they unbutton the collar for the first time.²⁸ The "Brother" or the "Sister" of the "Hereafter", as it is expected, take active part in the funeral of their murids. They wash the body of the deceased. The female body must be washed only by her "Sister". Washing the deceased, the "Brother" or the "Sister" pour water on the dead body three times from a small cup, uttering:

Dastûrî Şams,
Baniyô, zi âxê çebûyî,
tuê haîrî nâv âxê.
Rahmat li ta ba,
Çawâ barxê Silt'an Ezîd.

*By the command of Shams (Sun),
O human being, you are created from the earth;*

You will become dust,²⁹
You will be blessed
As a lamb of Sultan Yezid.³⁰

When the man dies without circumcision, the “Brother”, after performance of the ritual, cuts the foreskin, which must be buried afterwards in earth where a man’s foot has never stepped. This detail is a remnant of a once probably commonly practiced rite of circumcision which later disappeared. Moreover, the posthumous circumcision is also for the time being a very rare phenomenon: not every sheikh performs it during the funeral ceremony.

After washing of the dead body, they put it into a white shroud in a specific position: if it is male, they put the right hand on the left hand and the right leg on the left one. If it is female - *vice versa*. The shroud must be tied over the head as a bundle.

The depth of the grave in the case of a male deceased will be equal to the distance from his feet until his navel; in the case of a female - until her breast.

When they put the body into the grave, the “Brother” gets into it, unties the bundle, readjusts the hands and feet of the deceased and turns his (her) head to the *qibla*. (The “Sister” is deprived of this function although she can attend the process of interment with the other women). On both sides of the body in the grave they lay together flat stones in three rows and put on them another stone covering the body’s face and breast. This is called **kavirê salimê**, i.e. “the stone of health”. According to Yezidi beliefs, after the burial, when the funeral procession arrives home, the deceased tries to stand and hits his (her) forehead on the stone, and only then realizes that he (she) is dead and buried, and exclaims grievously: **Way, ê (yâ) mirî azim?** “Oh, is it me who died”.^{30a}

On the grave of a woman they usually put two stones - one at the place of the feet, the other at the head; for men - respectively two stones on each side. These stones are called **sarkêlk**. The Muslim Kurds call them **k’êl**.³¹

A curious detail concerning funeral rites of the Yezidis is attested in the **Siya-hetname** (“Travell-notes”) of the famous Turkish traveller of the 17th century Evliya Chelebi in his description of the Yezidis of Sindjar in Northern Iraq. E. Chelebi wrote: “It is strange that if a wealthy Yezidi man dies, they wash him in onion water and plant onion on his sepulchral mound. To put the hair of a dog into the deceased’s shroud is a common rule among them... When in this country a black dog is born, big celebrations take place. And if a dog dies, they wash it with onion water and bury it in a special cemetery for dogs”.³² The very high reverence towards the dog by the Yezidis, verging even on worship, can be seen also in the following statement of E. Chelebi: “.... They feed the children first by black dog’s milk. If anyone hits the dog, they ruthlessly kill him. Everyone has 5-10 dogs. First they give food to dogs and then eat themselves”. This was the real picture of the attitude to a dog in Ancient Iran as one of the important ideological concepts of the Zoroastrianism. When the righteous Viraz, a pious Zoroastrian, in his infernal itinerancy saw “the soul of a man whom the demons were tearing as dogs do, and the man was giving bread to the dogs and they did not eat it, and they constantly ate the breast, feet, belly and thigh of the man”, he wondered: “What sin did this body commit whose soul is undergoing such heavy punishment?”, and heard the answer: “This is the soul of that wicked man who in the world withheld food from the shepherds’ dogs and

watchdogs, or had beaten or killed them” (*AV*, 33-34). We have a long encomium to the dog in the Vendidad (Fragard XIII), where all dogmatic and ritual matters concerning this animal are discussed: “If those two dogs of mine, the shepherd’s dog and the house dog, pass by the house of any of my faithful people, let them never be kept away from it. For no house could subsist on the earth made by Ahura, but for those two dogs of mine, the shepherd’s dog and the house dog” - says *inter alia* the Old Iranian text (*Vd.*, XIII, 9.49).

Though, during the Islamic period the dog has been subverted from its high pedestal and became an unlawful animal, the traces of its former splendour are still clearly seen among the Iranian nomadic and seminomadic peoples, including the Yezidis.

There is no doubt that a dog, especially a black one, and an onion have also explicit apotropaic functions, as indispensable means for expelling the evil beings and ghosts (cf., e.g., **sagdīd** ceremony in Zoroastrian funeral tradition). Some elements of the worship of onion can also be traced in Chelebi’s story; he says: “If someone breaks an onion with his fist, his head will be broken too, and he will be killed”.³³ E. Chelebi’s important information, as far as I know, has never been mentioned in the relevant literature.

After the body is buried, the procession returns except for the five **t’irēqs** (see below, and note 25). One of them, usually the “Brother”, reads the following prayer on the grave mound of the deceased, repeating it three times. The prayer is called **duāyē tasmilē a’rd** - “prayer of interment”.

Nārē Haq,
Nūrē Haq,
Tarāzū Haq,
Haq bi Haq.

Yā Dawrēšē a’rd,
Ta dā av a’vd
Tu t’unabūn dā,
Habūn bir.

Fire of God,
Light of God,
Weights of God,
*Truth of God.*³⁴

*O, deity of Earth,*³⁵
*You created this slave,*³⁶
You created the emptiness,
*You took the existing.*³⁷

During the funeral, in an unspecified time, but definitely before the burial, the “Brother” (in case of his absence, the other male representative from his family) must read the prayer “**Bōrabōr**”.³⁸ At the first funeral repast after the burials (**xērā bičūk**) cows and rams are slaughtered in an odd number. The meat is prepared with-

out spices and distributed among the neighbours or countrymen early in the morning when the rays of the sun just touch the earth. During the immolation of animals and when opening the lid of the pan, the “Brother” reads the prayer :

**Sifrayî jalîl,
Qurbânê Ibrâhîm-xalîl;
Qabûl-maqbûl ba.**

*Splendid meal,
Let us be a sacrifice to Ibrahim Khalil;
(May it) be received.*

It should be indicated that the **xêr** (the funeral repast) is arranged twice: **xêrâ biçûk** or **xêrâ pêşîn** - during seven days after the death, and **xêrâ mazin** - up to seven years after the death. The Yezidis are convinced, that the mouth of the deceased is turned to the earth, and he is not able to lay in the grave calmly until the first funeral repast is done. After performing the ritual and sacrifice, it is believed, that the dead turns to a normal position; they often say *a propos* of this: **davê vî ardê darxist** - “his (the dead’s) mouth has turned away from the earth”. If the relatives of the dead are not able to arrange the funeral repast, they prepare *pilav* or meat in seven pans and distribute it among the neighbours. Opening the lids of the pans, the “Brother” reads the same prayer.

After the **xêrâ biçûk** the “Brother” or the “Sister” receives the clothing of the dead murid. As to “Sister”, her role in the whole funeral process is limited only to the washing of the body of the female deceased.

If the deceased has no heir, his/her property passes into the hands of the “Brother” or the “Sister” of the “Hereafter”.

The “Brother” also takes part in the ritual of circumcision (when it is practiced) of the son of his murid and in the so-called **bisk** ceremony.³⁹ That is the reason why the “Brother” is often called **şêxê sunnâtê** or **şêxê biskê**.

The rite of **bisk** is performed only for boys.⁴⁰ When a year passes after a boy’s birth,⁴¹ the “Brother” is invited to cut three tufts of hair from his head: on the crown - **t’unjîk**, on the forehead - **t’amôrî**, behind the ears - **gulânjîk**, and during the ceremony gives the following admonition to the boy:

**Barxê Silt’an Ezîdî,
Bimînî çawâ êzdî;
Dûr bî dîskâ danê,
Dûr bî li delingâ şîn,
H’avî bîxwadê êzdî bî.**

*You are the lamb of Sultan Yezid,
May you stay as a Yezid!
May you be far from promiscuous links with the spiritual caste!
May you be far from marriage with the followers of other religions!
Be a Yezid to your seventh generations!*

After that he utters: **aw zārē mina** - “It is my child”. The “Brother” wraps the three bundles of hair from the head of the boy in a rag or paper, burns them or, being in sacred places, buries them there.

At the **bisk** ceremony it is necessary to sacrifice animals: **xūn garakē birēža** - “blood must be spilled”, - say the Yezidis in this case.

Having performed the rite of circumcision, or **bisk**, the “Brother” receives a gift from the child’s father, a sheep or money as usual. Though the **bisk** ceremony concerns only boys, it may be supposed, that its older form included also the girls and, correspondingly, the “Sister” of the “Next World”. Perhaps, it was gradually lost because among the neighbouring Islamic peoples, and even Christians, the cutting of women’s hair was always considered as a form of punishment for adultery and fornication. This is, probably, the reason why the rite lost its symmetry.

What is more significant is the semantic value of hair, which symbolizes a sort of power, acquired by the “Brother” over his murid in the “Next World”. As it is generally known, according to a very popular belief in the East, hair, nails and teeth of a man should not be lost, because on the Day of Judgement, they will be demanded from him. That is why some peoples - Armenians, Persians⁴² and also Kurds hide the nail-parings, hair-combings and fallen teeth in wall chinks, cracks of mud walls, or bury them, repeating a special invocation in order to have them following everywhere and answering for them at the Day of Resurrection (or at the Trial before the bridge connecting this world with hell or paradise).⁴³ In this connection, it is important to note, that the Armenians of Iran (Isfahan region) instruct their children to bury cut nails and repeat at the same time:

Vortey efam, yeds gak’,
Datastanis juyab tak’.

Wherever I go, follow me,
To answer (for me) at the day of my Trial.

The Armenians of Chmshkatsag (Arm. *Չմշկածագ*, Turkish. Çimişgezek), in Dersim hid thier nail-pairings in a wall chink reciting the quatrain below:

Ayung, dun hos kec’ir,
Ašxarh, dun vəka ēyir,
Ēp’ ər hōgis aīnoγə ga,
Dun hētə ənker ēyir.

Nail, you stay here,
World, you be a witness,
When (the Angel of death) comes to take my soul,
You be a friend of his.^{43a}

Such a belief is attested also among the Iranian population of Dersim, the Zazas (see below). The Armenian intellectual of the end of the 19th century Andranik, who was a wonderful connoisseur of this people, gives interesting evidence of it in his travell-notes. He reports: “The inhabitants of Dersim believe in transmigration; one

of their *seyids* told me that when a man dies his soul undergoes a series of rebirths. First, he appears in the form of an animal, then, consequently, a reptile, a bird, an insect, a butterfly and a mosquito until the Day of Judgement. The first precondition for keeping the normal course of reincarnation is that one should not lose even a hair from his body. Probably, that is why, it is an obligatory rule for everyone to bury his hair-combings and nail-pairings in the earth, in order to prevent them from being scattered by the wind. Otherwise, it is believed, one should have great difficulties during the Last Judgment".^{43b} I would suggest that this may be the main purpose of preserving the hairs of the head, beard and moustache by almost all sectarians (the Ahl-i haqq, Zazas, Yezidis), and especially by the priesthood. Due protection of removed hairs is always fraught with danger: when one cuts his hair, even if he carefully hides them, there is still a chance to lose at least a single thread of this precious material, while it is easier and safer to leave them grow in their predestined places.

Hence, three bundles of hair become a sign, symbolizing the murid's destiny at the hands of the "Brother" in the "Hereafter". Though it is not spoken explicitly, it is probably implied, that the hair bundles will be returned after the successful end of the Trial near the Şirāt bridge: perhaps, after each positive answer of the murid, he would receive one bundle.⁴⁴ It is an important fact that the number of the tufts corresponds with the number of the questions, addressed to the murid on the bridge, and with the content of the admonitions recited by the "Brother" during the *bisk* ceremony.

Thus, the role of "Brother" and the "Sister" of the "Next World" is principally limited to their participation in the funerals of their murids and also with the performance of the rites, dealing with children. Although some authors consider the "Brother" and the "Sister" to play also the role of godfather or godmother,⁴⁵ there is no ground for such a statement at least because the godfather among the Kurds or Yezidis has a special name - *k'irîv* or *k'irîva* and is chosen among laymen (sometimes even followers of other confessions: Armenians, etc.),⁴⁶ while the "Brother" and the "Sister" must by all means belong to sheikhy families.

Certain indications of the "Brother" of the "Next World" can be found in Classic Kurdish poetry, as e.g. in *Mâm û Zîn* of Ahmade Khani:

**Min minnat bi wî şolî qat nîna,
Az û Qaratazhdîn birâyêd âxiratêna.**

*I do not care about this matter,
As me and Qaratazhdîn are brothers of the Hereafter
(i.e. "we are very close friends").⁴⁷*

The institution of the "Brother" and the "Sister" of the "Next World" and the related rites find parallels among the Ahl-i-haqq and the Shiite popular beliefs about Ali and Fatima.

According to V. Minorsky, to achieve moral perfection, the Ahl-i-haqq create special social unions between one or several men and a woman (*şart wa iqrâr*) who are called the "brother(s)" and the "sister".⁴⁸ Such unions are concluded in anticipation of the Day of Resurrection.⁴⁹

The "Next World Brotherhood" is explicitly represented in the institution of

mūsāhib (Arab. **muṣāhib** “interlocutor, friend”) among the Zazās or Dim(i)līs, an extreme Shi‘a Iranian people of Central Anatolia⁵⁰ and among the other Alevi sects in Turkey. “In contrast to the Yezidis, however, the institution of the **mūsāhib** amongst the Zazas exists only for the male sex. The **mūsāhib** is chosen by a teenager without his parents’ interference”.⁵¹

Nevertheless, according to other data, candidates for **mūsāhib**-hood must be two adult married people of the same age, and the spiritual union, therefore, includes four persons: “The shirt of **mūsāhib**-hood covers four persons”, - says the religious comment.⁵² This is exactly implied by P.J. Bumke, who wrote: “... die *mūsahip*-Freundschaft ... zwischen zwei nichtverwandten, etwa gleichaltrigen Männern und ihren Frauen durch einen *seyit*, der der *pir* eines der beiden ist, geschlossen wird, nur die Zugehörigkeit der Partner zum Alevitum zur Voraussetzung hat und eine Inzestschranke zwischen ihren Nachkommen über drei bis vier Generationen konstituiert. Es handelt sich hier um eine religiös gefärbte pseudo-verwandschaftliche Bruderbeziehung, die u.a. generalisierte Reziprozität auch in wirtschaftlicher Hinsicht und unverbrüchliche Freundschaft impliziert”.⁵³

Twelve years ago, based on the archive materials of Gevorg Halajian, a native of Dersim, I tried to represent the *mūsāhib* institution in the following way: “After the decision is made, the two teenagers declare it to the family cleric - *rahbar* (or *ray-bar*) - who blesses the spiritual union. In the honour of this event a celebration is arranged. Henceforth, the relations of the two *muṣāhibs* will be closer and more durable than blood-bonds. The *muṣāhib* ceremony must be performed before marriage (sic!). The *muṣāhib* relationship entails the following reciprocal obligations: 1) to safeguard the safety and honour of the co-*muṣāhib*’s family; 2) in case of death, to look after the co-*muṣāhib*’s wife and children like his own; 3) and in an emergency the *muṣāhibs* must spare no efforts, risking their very lives, to rescue each other. Sexual and matrimonial intercourse with the dead *muṣāhib*’s wife is strictly forbidden”.⁵⁴

In any case, the recent publications by the Zaza authors shed new light on the *mūsāhib* institution although the problem of partnership - only a male couple, or mixed union - still remains open.

The **mūsāhib**-hood is characterized by the Zazas as a “fire shirt: he who can not bear it, should not put it on”, or as a “cooked beet: everyone who can not chew it, must not try to, as he can lose his 32 teeth”. Therefore, it is considered to be a serious responsibility, a heavy social burden which can not be born by everyone, as it manifests the friendship feeling of the Prophet himself.

The ceremony is called **kamarībast**, i.e. “belt binding”. The cleric of the family - *rahbar* or *seyid* - binds a belt on the waists of the two candidates. This belt (**kamar**) has three knots symbolizing three moral concepts which the **mūsāhibs** must observe in their life: 1) Not to touch the unlawful; 2) Not to lie; 3) Not to fornicate or commit adultery. Then he gives verbal admonitions and makes them swear. Afterwards, closing the ceremony, he reads two special prayers:⁵⁵

1. *O tālibs*,⁵⁶

If anyone deprives his wealth

From his mūsāhib,

May God strike and destroy him;

Let him directly go to hell.

*And if anyone says: the back of my mūsāhib is crooked,
God will not bless his way.*

*And if a mūsāhib takes offense of his mūsāhib,
He will become a bee deprived of honey.*

*And if a mūsāhib divides himself from his mūsāhib,
God's curses will fall upon him.*

*Then the trace of their way is wrong,
And they will be dishonoured even in hell.*

2. Bow (your heads) and let there be goodness!

Let your dreams become true.

May your wishes be accepted.

Let Muhammad-Ali bless (you),

May you not be ashamed before Justice,

May you not be deprived of bread and light,

May the Twelve Imams be ready

To free you from misfortunes,

May God (and) Muhammad-Ali fulfill

The wishes of your tongues and the dreams of your souls.

Glory to you, O Allah,

God is the Friend.⁵⁷

Unlike the Yezidi "Brother", who must be definitely a cleric - a sheikh, with his partner from the laymen - *murid*, the Zaza *mūsāhibs* both are ordinary lay persons (*tālibs*). The role of the cleric here is confined only to the consecration of the union.

Although the extant materials do not allow us to elucidate the role of the *mūsāhib* in the funeral ceremonies of his partner and, especially, in the "Hereafter", the parallelism with the Yezidi institution is quite obvious.^{57a}

At any rate, the Zaza *mūsāhib*, as well as the Yezidi godbrotherhood, have acquired a Sufi, mystic substantiation. "Brotherhood" in the Yezidi faith is included into the system of five obligatory relationships: *šēx*, *p'ir*, *hōsta*, *marhavi*, *yār-birē āxiratē* (see below: note 25). The spiritual hierarchy of the Zazas' includes four degrees or doors (*dört kapı*), according to the Bektashi tradition, where also *mūsāhib*-hood is included: *rahbar* (for *tarīqat*), *p'ir* (for *mārifat*), *seyid* or *muršid* (for *haqīqat*) and *mūsāhib* (for *šarī'at*).

The Yezidis' beliefs about the "Brother" or the "Sister" of the "Next world", as has already been stated, correspond also with the Shiite popular conceptions about Ali and Fatima.

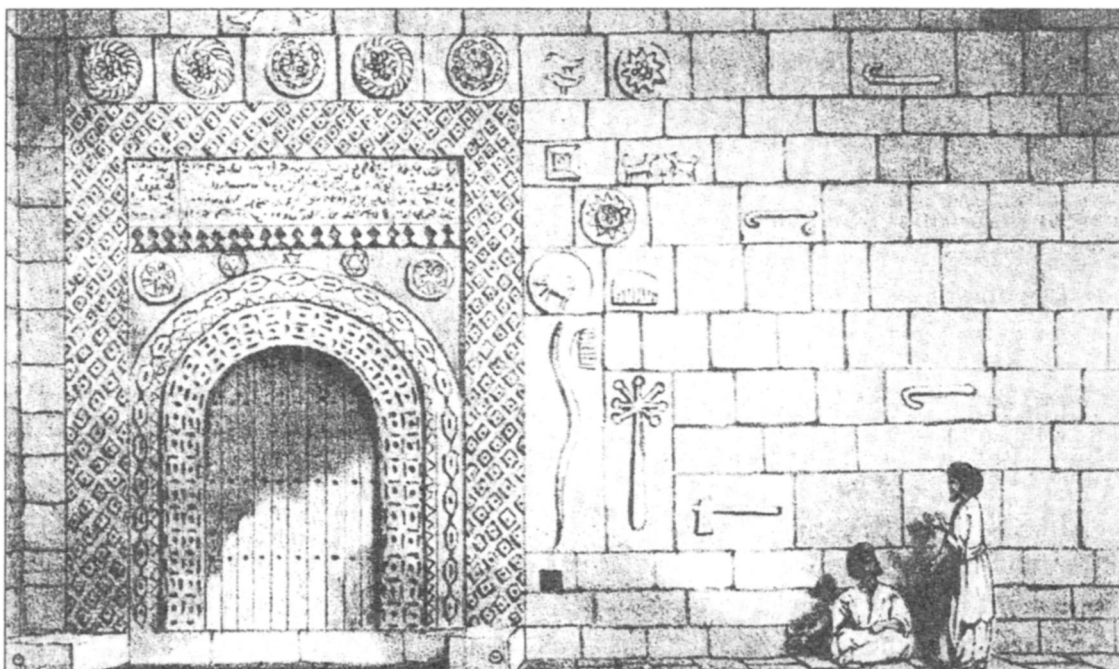
In the folk legends Fatima figures as *Xātūn-e Mahšar* or *Xātūn-e qiyāmat*, i.e. "the Lady of the Day of Judgement". She is the first woman who will enter paradise and speak to God asking him to dispense justice to the people,⁵⁸ at the same time she will intercede for the souls of her adherents. Then the women will take hold of the fringe of her garment and like a flash of lightning will cross the *Širāt* bridge. Ali plays the same role for men (in some stories - Muhammad).⁵⁹

By the way, the "Sister" of the "Next World" of the Yezidis is also called "The Lady of the Next World" - *stiyā āxiratē*.⁶⁰ A deep faith in Fatima and Ali, as the

mediators and defenders in the “Next World”, evoked a series of blessings and invocations, like: “May Ali and Fatima meet you the first night in the grave” or “May you have fellowship with Ali and Fatima on the Day of Judgement”, etc.⁶¹

Among the Ahl-i haqq, Fatima plays the role of the divine mediator and is called Ramzbar - “keeper of secrets”, she also bears the name *Xātūn-e qiyāmat* - “Lady of the Day of Judgement” and is considered to be created from the divine sweat.⁶² Ramzbar is also a bisexual angel;⁶³ in her male hypostasis she is known as an *iqrār*.

The worship of Fatima, as it can be concluded from the separate allusions in the religious folklore, penetrated also into the Yezidi faith, although without a proper representation, probably, because of its evident link with Islam. The Yezidis have a deity-patroness of children and childbirth - *xāfūnā farxā*, which is often identified



Mausoleum of Sheikh 'Adi in Lalish in 1849

From: G.P. Badger. The Nestorians and their Rituals, I

with *pira-fāt*, another female deity with the obvious demiurgic functions. During the birth pangs and confinement, the women usually appeal to *pira-fāt* for help; they say: *yā pira-fāt, alī min bika* - “O, P.F., help me!”. In Iranian popular beliefs Fatima often figures as a patroness of childbirth; in some cases Mary (Mariam) is also represented in this function. The latter, along with Fatima, is one of the most beloved and venerated female figures of Iranian folk tradition.

Ali and Fatima are popular mostly among the extreme Shi'ites, various Sufi and Dervish orders, where they are often deified.⁶⁴ The deification of Ali and Fatima mainly occurs on the Iranian ground. Their images have accumulated many features of the local eclectic religious and cultural substrate and have acquired quite different characteristics from the orthodox Islamic views.

The main link between the characters of Ali and Fatima in Shi'a folk tradition and those of the Yezidi godbrotherhood and the analogous institutions of the Zaza and Ahl-i-haqq is their role as mediators, intercessors and defenders of their followers in a future life. All of them are, probably, the various manifestations of an

older concept of the spiritual union as an essential prerequisite for well-being in the life after death, transformed through Islamic mysticism.

The existence of the Sufi elements in the Yezidi religion should not surprise, because Sheikh Adi b. Musafir himself, the founder of the sect and the brotherhood of the "Next World"⁶⁵ (according to the Yezidis), was a Sufi leader.⁶⁶ To the obvious Sufi traces of Yezidism belong also the symbolism of a cloths' colour, the meaning of the form and colour of the headdress, the mystic aim of the circle, the secret role of light, etc.,⁶⁷ the most conspicuous one: Malak Tavus - the Peacock angel - the supreme deity of the Yezidis.⁶⁸

So, we can propose that the institution of the "Brother" and the "Sister" of the "Next World" basically contains elements, inherent first of all, to mystic Sufi circles.

As to the origin of the concept of a spiritual union or godbrotherhood, it is undoubtedly connected with traditions going back to the most remote epoch.⁶⁹ For example, a comparison suggests itself, with the institution of "Friends" among the ancient Scythians, which also had a religious significance and which members were supposed to take an obligatory part in the funeral procedures of the "Friend". As E.A. Grantovsky points out: "Merely traditional obligatory participation in the obsequies shows the special links in cultic and ritual relations, which were also typical for the "Friends" of the other Iranian peoples: the particular attitude towards the death of a friend and participation in his burial rituals".⁷⁰

The Scythian institution of "Friends" is probably the oldest manifestation of the Old Iranian (or Near Eastern) idea of Holy Brotherhood.

NOTES

1. See: С.А. Егназаров. *Краткий этнографический очерк езидов Эриванской губернии*. Тифлис, 1881, сс. 180, 229, 279;
اسماعيليك، چول، اليزيديه قديما و حديثا، بيروت، ١٩٣٤، ص. ٧٨؛ الدكتور سامي سعيد الاحمد، اليزيديه، ج. ٢، بغداد، ١٩٧١، ص. ١٢١؛ سعيد الديوهجي، اليزيديه، بغداد، ١٩٧٢، ص. ٤٤.
2. Th. Menzel. *Yazidi*. - EI, Leyden - London, 1933, p.1166.
3. See: R. Lescot. *Quelques publications récentes sur les Yézidis*. - Bulletin d'Etudes Orientales, N 6 (1938), p. 84; E. Drower. *Peacock Angel*. London, 1941, p. 20; C.J.Edmonds. *A Pilgrimage to Lalish*. London, 1967, p. 7; Ph. Kreyenbroek. *Yezidism - Its Background, Observances and Textual Tradition*. New York: "Edwin Mellen Press", 1995, p. 136. The only publication completely dealing with this problem is, perhaps, my short article published in Russian some fourteen years ago (cf. Г. С. Асатрян. О "брате" и "сестре" загробной жизни в религиозных верованиях езидов. - Страны и народы Ближнего и среднего Востока, том XIII. Ереван, 1985, сс. 262-271).
4. I would like to express my sincere gratitude first of all to my friend, a devoted Yezidi sheikh from the Šamsāni (Zarzāni) clan, Sheikh Hasane Mamud (Hasan Tamoyan), Arame Chachan and Sadaf Lazgian for their generous help and assistance.
5. Sheikh Adī (ʿAdī), together with Malak Tavus and Yezīd (Siltʿan Ezīd), is one of the three incarnations of God. He was a historical personality (Šayx ʿAdī bin Musāfir al-Hakkārī), born in 1072 in Baalbak, in the village of Beytʿfar (now in Lebanon) and died in 1169 in Lalish (in Sindjar, Northern Iraq), where he was buried. Sheikh Adi was a reknown Sufi leader, founder of the ʿAdawiya sect, which afterwards evidently became one of the constituents of the Yezidi community (the Yezidis even now consider themselves as *adabi*, without, sometimes, understanding its meaning) (see: EI, vol.1. Leyden, 1960, p. 195; cf. also: R.Y. Ebied, L.J.M. Young. *An Account of the History and Rituals of the Yazidis of Mosul*. - Le Muséon, t. 85 (1972), p. 498, and more detailed, with full literature: Գ.Ա.Ասատրյան, Ա.Պ.Փոլադյան. Եզդիների դավանանքը (Հիմնական աստվածությունները,

սուրբ գրքերը). - ՊՔՀ, N 4 (1989), էջ 136-137 [G.S.Asatrian, A.P.Poladian. *The Yezidi Religion: Pantheon & Sacred Books (Armenian translation with commentaries)*]).

6. There is a Yezidi religious *qasîda* (*qasîd*) describing the *Salât* bridge in the following way:

P'ira Salâtê waka dazî,
K'e xêr kir - sarra bazi,
Yê xêr nakir - sar larzî.

P'ira Salâtê waka mû,
Yê xêr kir - sarra darbazû,
Yê xêr nakir - dastê vî barrû.

*The Salât bridge (is) like a cotton thread,
Who has committed good deeds, he ran over it,
Who did not commit good deeds, he shivered on it.*

*The Salât bridge (is) like a hair,
Who committed good deeds, he passed through it,
Who did not commit good deeds, he remained ashamed
(literally: "his hands over his face") (Sheikh Hasane Mamud).*

It well matches with the classic Islamic and Christian descriptions of the bridge through hell - *şirât al-mustaqîm*. The Zoroastrian *činvat puhl* also has the same characteristics.

7. On the moral conceptions of the Yezidis see: C.A. Ермазов, op.cit., pp.190-191.
8. The first formula can be literally translated as: "Are you far from the pot of paint?" (Kurdish *dzik* "pot", *dan* "paint"). The pot of paint symbolizes a mixing process, admixture, promiscuity. The next formula also deals with colour and paint. It is translated literally: "Are you far from having the hem of (your) skirt painted blue?". The blue colour in Yezidism is under taboo as a symbol of alienation. At the same time in this context it renders "fornication, adultery", as the idiomatic expression *dalinga xwa şîn kirin* definitely means "to commit adultery", cf.: *filank'as dalinga xwa şîn kir* "someone has committed adultery", etc.
9. Sultan Yezid (Silt'an Ezîd) is one of the three main figures of the Yezidi pantheon. The Yezidis claim that Silt'an Ezîd was the Umayyad caliph Yazîd bin Mu'awiya, who is considered to be their eponymous ancestor. Though this assertion is in fact deprived of any historical background, however, the name of the sect and Silt'an Ezîd must have been derived just from the mentioned Umayyad caliph, due to the secondary attribution by the inimical Muslim environment as a pejorative nickname. Especially in a Shi'a milieu, the name Yazîd (Yezîd) has always been a synonym of an infidel, idolater, *kāfir* because of the role this caliph played in the events of Karbala. Therefore, I think, the name of the sect is an exoethnonym - the name given by aliens, as a derogatory nickname; endoethnonyms of the Yezidis were primarily *Adabi*, *Dasini* or *Şarqi*. Silt'an Ezîd himself is also a late deity which is manifested in the vagueness of his functions and very uncertain role he plays in dogmas, rituals and cultic practice. The derivation of the name Yezîd from *izad* (*izadi*) or the toponym *Yazd* is, of course, out of the discussion (see in details with literature: G.S.Asatrian, A.P.Poladian, op. cit. pp. 137-138).
10. An open wardrobe of bedclothes in the Yezidi houses. It is considered to be a holy place. The Yezidis believe that there lives a divine being - *pîrâ stêr*. The word *stêr* derives from Old Iranian **starya-*, with i-Umlaut (see in details: G.S.Asatrian, V.I.A.Livshits. *Le Système consonantique de la langue kurde*.- Acta Kurdica, vol.1 (1994), pp. 91 (§ XIII, 7), 100, note 4).
11. Arab. *xirqa*. A coarse woolen cloak of gray colour worn by the sheikhs and the heads of Sufi orders, the sign of divine power. The Yezidis have a special esteem and respect towards the *xarqa*; it is one of the main accessories of the cultic practice, considered to be equal to the *qawls* - religious oral tradition. We have recorded a short etiological folk story in verse about the *xarqa*, compiled in the form of a debate between a disciple and God, where also the formula of the preparation of *xarqa* is given:

Ta dāya paška jîhûya, filaya, surmānê,
Ta dāya dastê wān Tawratā, Injîlā, Qurānā,

Galō, ummata ma či bina bawarī (or šahdatt) ū imāna?
 Azē bišnim rû ‘ardā qawl ū xarqaya,
 Mērē ezdi lē bina bawarī ū šahdaya.

Galō, ma’nīyā wī xarqayī čīya?

Čav ta biva spīya,
 Tu nizānī ma’nīyā wī xarqayī čīya?!
 Zargōza, mōza, lapa hirīya,
 Havēnē har čār kaniyē spīya.

*Disciple - (O God), You have given shares (portions) to the Jews,
 Christians, Muslims,
 You have given them the Torah, the Gospel, the Qur’an,
 Tell me (galō is a vocative particle), what our people have
 to believe in?*

*God - I will send to the Earth qawl and xarqa,
 The Yezidi man must believe in them.*

Disciple - Tell me, what is the meaning of this xarqa?

*God - May you lose the light of your eyes (literally: “may your eye
 become white”),
 Why don’t you know the meaning of this xarqa?!
 (It is made of the extract of) nutshell and banana and a
 handful of wool (i.e. a piece of wollen cloth),
 Seasoned in all four white (holy) springs (in Lalish).*

12. Ta dā “have you given” is, perhaps, from ta sōz dā “have you given the word”, cf. sōz dān “promise, agree”.

13. Literally: “You are not friends of each other”.

14. Literally: “to strike, hit the xarqa”, i.e. sheikhs who wear it.

15. Šarpikā zērīn means “golden mug” (cf. šarp/bik “mug”) and describes the sacerdotal classes as the most pure, unmixed social group - zērīn - “golden one”, apparently in contrast to diskā danē “the pot of paint”, symbolizing perversity or violation of caste norms. However, due to semantic parallelism, the correlative pair šarpikā zērīn / diskā danē with the opposition of the direct and metaphorical meanings of its constituents, as a poetic device, merely designates an exhortation to avoid promiscuous contacts with the clergy.

16. See: notes 8,15.

17. Religious song and, simultaneously, the whole oral religious tradition - qawl ū bayt’.

18. Cf. The Yezidi saying: jīnata - minat na lazima, i.e. “Is it paradise, to be grateful?”.

19. I.e.: the sacred oral literature (see: note 17).

20. Probably, Šeikh Adi is implied, the founder of the religious tradition (see: note 5).

21. I.e.: Way bi illah.

22. Faqīrō, with the sg. masc. ending of the vocative case -ō, from faqīr (Arab. faqīh). Šeikh Adi is meant (see: note 5).

23. Simila, from bismillah.

24. The informant (Šeikh Hasane Mamud) believes that a’rafat is the second and the šarafat - the third day of every religious fiesta. At the same time ‘Arafat is the name of a hill and the adjoining plane near Mecca, famous as a place of pilgrimage. The context, however, definitely indicates the Day of Resurrection (cf. the next line: “On the bridge of Širāt”). According to the Sufi interpretation, ‘arāfat (as well as يوم القيامة “Day of Resurrection”) is the essence and nature of the human being and, metaphorically, the final abode of his path of life (Šeyx ‘Abd al-‘Azīz bin Muhammad Nasafī. Kašf al-haqā’eq. Tehran, 1980, pp. 226-227). It may well be also some allusion to the seventh Sura of Qur’an - ‘Araf, which should be read by anyone each month as a precautionary measure, so that they need have no fear on Doomsday. As to šarafat, very likely, it is here a rhyme-word to a’rafat.

25. It is incumbent upon every Yezidi to have five spiritual leaders (t'irêq, Arab. *ṭarīqa*), including the "Brother": *Pênj t'irêqê farzê ma havin*, - says Hasane Mamud: *šêx* "sheikh", *p'ir* "pir", *hosta* (Persian *ustād*) "master", *marhavi* (Arab. *murabbi*) "tutor" and *yār-birê axiratê* "Brother of the Next World".
26. *Kantya spî*, the "White Spring" at Lalish, near Mosul, where the tomb of Sheikh Adi is found, is one of the most sacred places for the Yezidis becoming a *qibla*, towards which the Yezidis turn when praying.
27. It must be: *Dastêd ma li damanê har penj*..., i.e., literally: "(May) our hand be on the shirts of our five spiritual leaders".
28. See: Sa'id al-Ahmad, op.cit., p.121; Sa'id al-Dīyōcī, op. cit., p. 44; Th. Menzel, op.cit. pp. 1166-1167.
29. Literally: "You will enter the ground". Kurdish *ax* "earth, ground, dust" is an archaic form attested mostly in cultic poetry; it is derived from OIr. **aika-*, with prothetic *h-* (cf. Persian *xāk*). Its ordinary synonym in the vernacular Kurdish is *xwalî*, *xālî*, from OIr. **hwarda-*.
30. I.e.: "As a devoted follower of his faith".
- 30a. Cf. The forthcoming article of V. Arakelova (see below, note 38).
31. Cf. Kurdish swearing formula: *h'atā bi k'elā mirinê*, lit.: "Until the stone of death".
32. *Թուրքական աղբյուրներ, Հատոր Գ., Հվլիա Չեղբի. Թարգմանությունը բնագրից, առաջաբանը և ծանոթագրությունները Արշակ Սաֆրաստյանի. Երևան, 1967, էջ 188* [Evlia Çelebi. *Siyahetname*. - Turkish Sources, vol. 3. Selected Armenian translation from the original text, introduction and commentaries by Arshak Safrastian. Yerevan: "Academy of Sciences", 1967, p.188]. The detailed discussion of the role of the dog in funeral ceremonies see in : Б.А. ЛЯТВИНСКИЙ, А.В. Седов. *Культы и ритуалы Кушанской Бактрии*. М., 1984, сс. 161-169.
33. E. Çelebi, *ibid*. The worship of a black hound is attested also among the extreme Shi'a sectarians of Eastern Anatolia. T. Gilbert, a French diplomat or Christian missionary, in his short letter to the Société Asiatique in November 10, 1872, wrote *inter alia*: "Les Kizil-bachs... adorent un grand chien noir, comme l'image de la Divinité" (T.Gilbert. *Note sur les sects dans le Kurdistan*. - JA, Septième série, tome 2. Paris, 1873, p. 393; cf. the re-edition of this article with commentaries in "Iran & Caucasus", vol. 1, pp. 203-204).
34. The phrase should be amended, perhaps, to: *Haq-ê Haq* - "Truth of God".
35. On *Dawrêšê a'rd* see in details the article of V.Voskanian in this issue of "Iran & Caucasus".
36. The only meaning of the verb *dān* in contemporary Kurmanji dialects is "to give"; however, in this ritual text, one can notice the semantic traces of its Old Iranian etymon, **dā-* "give" and "erect, create".
37. I.e.: the soul of the deceased.
38. See the full text of this prayer with the English translation and commentaries in the article of V.Arakelova "The Funeral Rites of the Yezidis" (In: "Iran & Caucasus", vol. 5, forthcoming).
39. Kurdish *bisk* literally means "topknots, tuft of hair" = Persian *kākol*. It can be compared with Manichean Middle Persian and Parthian *pwsag* / *pusag* / "garland", Arm. *psak* id.
40. Ա. Ավդալ. *Քուրդ կինը նահապետական ընտանիքում՝ ըստ ազգագրական և ֆոլկլորային նյութերի. - Աշխատություններ Պետական պատմական թանգարանի, Հտ. 1. Երևան, 1948, էջ 231-232* [A. Avdal. *The Kurdish (sc. Yezidi) woman according to the Ethnographic and Folkloric materials*. - Proceedings of the State Museum of History, vol. 1. Yerevan, 1948, pp. 231-232].
41. According to the other data: some months after the birth of a child (cf. A. Avdal, *ibid*.).
42. See: Садек Хедаят. *Нейрангестан*. - Переднеазиатский этнографический сборник, том 1. Москва, 1958, с. 283.
43. Cf. also: "The parings should be buried, or at least hidden, so that no enemy or sorcerer could get them, to scratch out the owner's eyes or work other evil with them... Parings of the toe-nails are often buried near the door of one's house, so that on the Day of Judgement they will be present to give witness that the owner has made pilgrimages. For the same reason they are sometimes buried at the entrance to a shrine, where they are an unquestioned proof that the pilgrimage has been made... Hair-combings, like nail-parings, should be buried; they should not be burned or the owner will suffer from dizziness, neither should they be thrown upon the ground, or someone might step on them or a crow might carry them away, and in either case the owner would suffer with headache" (B.A. Donaldson. *The Wild Rue: A Study of Muhammadan Magic and Folklore in Iran*. London, 1938, pp. 185-186). This was, perhaps, one of the elements of the Old Iranian Weltanschauung, which is attested in the extant written sources. Anything that was separated from the body of a man, according to the ancient Iranians, was considered dead matter, and was accordingly supposed to fall into the possession of the demon. Therefore, hair and nails, as soon as cut off, will be hidden under

the earth, accompanied by a special prayer. The Vendidad says: "... Thou shalt dig a hole, a *disti* (ten fingers) deep if the earth be hard, a *vitasti* (twelve fingers) deep if it be soft; thou shalt put the hair down there and thou shalt say aloud these fiend-smiting words: *Out of him by his piety Mazda made the plants grow up*" (Vd. XVII, I, 5).

- 43a. Հ.Յ. Գալստյան. *Զմէկածաղ և իր գիւղերը. Բեյրութ, 1869, էջ 506* [*Chmshkatsag and its villages. Beyruth, 1969, p. 506*].
- 43b. Անդրանիկ. *Տերութ. Թիֆլիս, 1990, էջ 167-168* [Andranik. *Dersim*. Tiflis, 1990. pp. 167-168].
44. It is highly symptomatic that when soliciting for their murids before Sheikh Adi during the Trial on the bridge, the "Brother" or the "Sister" characterize them as "irreproachable, faultless, without flaw" - *Aw silāmata, bē lak'aya* - "He (she) is sound, flawless". The whole appeal is apparently based on this circumstance, as a precondition for getting permission to pass the bridge. It emphasizes, of course, their moral perfection, but also somatic soundness as the required prerequisite.
45. Cf., e.g.: Th. Menzel, *ibid.*, p. 1166.
46. See in details: C.A. Егязаров, *ibid.*, pp. 44, 180. Kurdish *k'iriv(a)* has nothing to do with the Arm. *k'avor* (< *knk'avor*) "godfather"; it can be rather compared with the Persian *karīb* id., which occurred in vernacular language and some dialects. They may have come from Arab. *qarīb* "near (friend), relative" (see in details: Г.С. Асатрян. *Обряды детства и воспитание детей в традиционной культуре персов. - Этнография детства: Традиционные формы воспитания детей и подростков у народов Передней и Южной Азии. М., 1983, с. 81*).
47. مارف خه زنه دار، تیکستی مەم و زنی یامه می‌فالانی فولکلوری له کوکراوه کانی مارتن هارتمان، گوڤاری کولیجی فهدهبیات، ژماره ۱۶، بهغداد، ۱۹۷۳، ص، ۸۱.
48. See: V. Minorsky. *Ahl-I Hakk*. - EI, v. 1, p. 261. On the Ahl-i haqq see also: W. Ivanow. *The Truth-worshippers of Kurdistan*. Bombay, 1953.
49. V. Minorsky, *ibid.*
50. See with comprehensive literature: G.S.Asatrian. *Dim(i)t. People and language*. - Encyclopaedia Iranica, vol. VII/4, pp. 405-411; Г.С. Асатрян. *Некоторые вопросы традиционного мировоззрения заза. - Традиционное мировоззрение у народов Передней Азии. Москва, 1992, сс. 102-110, 210-213*.
51. G.S. Asatrian, N.Kh. Gevorgian. *Zāzā Miscellany: Notes on some Religious Customs and Institutions*. - In: A Green Leaf: Papers in Honour of Prof. J.P. Asmussen (Acta Iranica - XII). Leiden, 1988, p. 507.
52. Ali Kaya. *Tunceli Kültürü*. Istanbul, 1995, pp. 63-64.
53. P.J.Bumke. *Kizilbaş-Kurden in Dersim (Tunceli, Türkei)*. - Anthropos, N 74 (1979), p. 534.
54. G.S. Asatrian, N.Kh. Gevorgian, op. cit., *ibid.*
55. Ali Kaya, op. cit., pp. 64-65.
56. Arab. *ṭālib* in its direct meaning would be translated as the "student of a religious school, *medrese*", but as a Sufi term it means "disciple, lay person, *Strebende*" and, as such, is comparable with the term *murīd*.
57. In the original text: *Hü - dōst*, i.e.: "He is the Friend"; the Arab. *huwa* "He" is a common Sufi appeal for the Almighty.
- 57a. The institution of the *musahibs*, under the same name, occurs also among the Bektashis (see: M. Backhausen, A.J. Dierl. *Der rituelle Gottesdienst Cem des anatolischen Alevismus. Wuppertal, 1996, p.62*).
58. See: EI, v.II (1965), p.847.
59. See: B.A. Donaldson, op.cit., p. 77.
60. The word *str* is borrowed from the Arabic ست "lady" which is derived from سیدی due to the phonetic contraction.
61. B.A. Donaldson, *ibid.*, p. 119.
62. See: M. Mokri. *Contribution scientifique aux études iraniennes*. Paris, 1970, pp. 193, 217, 218; also: V. Minorsky, op. cit., p. 261.
63. V. Minorsky, *ibid.*
64. Cf.: В. А. Гордлевский. *Избранные сочинения*. Том 1, сс. 270-271; том 2, сс. 399-416; А. Мец. *Мусульманский ренессанс*. Москва, 1973, с. 251.
65. Cf.: С. А. Егязаров, op. cit., p. 279.
66. See in details: note 5.
67. В. Никитин. *Курды*. Москва, 1964, сс. 327, 335. On the Sufi - Yezidi dogmatic relations see: W. Ivanow, op. cit., p. 2; G. Furlani. *Il santi dei yezidi*. - Orientalia, vol. V, pp. 64-83.

68. Malak Tavus (Malak Tavûs, or Tavûse Malak) - the Peacock angel - is definitely the first figure of the Yezidi pantheon. The peacock has a controversial image in Islamic mysticism: as a gorgeous and the most beautiful creature of the world, symbol of grandeur and wisdom, having, at the same time, obvious demonic characteristics: its friendship with the Biblical Snake (according to the popular Sufi interpretation of the well-known story) and its active role in the expulsion of the first human pair from paradise. As a punishment God exiled the peacock from Eden, together with the Snake, and made its legs ugly and unpleasant:

یار شد با من بیکجا مار زشت تا بیافتام بخواری از بهشت

grievously complains the bird in the narration of Farid ad-din 'Attar, for:

طاوس را بنقش و نگاری که هست خلق
تحسین کنند و او خجل از پای زشت خویش (سعدی، گلستان، ۲، ۸)

The main impediment for the poor bird to return to his former abode in Eden is the Snake who became in fact the cause of its misfortune:

خه‌خه ای طاوس باغ هشت در سوختی از زخم مار هفت سر
صحبت این مار در خونت فکند وز بهشت عدن بیرونت فکند
تا نگرانی هلاک آن مار را کی شوی شایسته این اسرار را
گر خلاصی باشدت زین مار زشت آدمت با خویش گیرد در بهشت
(فریدالدین عطار، منطق‌الطیر، تهران ۱۳۵۳، ص. ۴).

Though the peacock embodies all the features of the Fallen angel, the Yezidis consider it as a virtuous god and demiurge. In the «Book of Revelation» (*K'it'ebā jalwa*) Malak Tavus says: «I was and now am and will remain for ever. I hold sway over the all creatures and regulate their affairs. I am ready; I am kind to all of them who believe in me and, when needed, appeal to me. No place is empty from me. I am a participant of all the events which heterodox people consider to be «evil» as they do not correspond to their wills» (*G.S. Asatrian, A.P. Poladian, op.cit., p. 141*). It must be stressed that Satan (*šayṭān*) in Sufi tradition is generally considered as the first great monotheist (*muwahhid*) of the world, as he refused to bow his head before Adam, a human being created from dust, yellow clay (Pers. *zarda gel*). The revolting nature of Satan is predetermined by divine providence and not by the fallen Archangel's own choice. So, in Islamic mysticism there is quite an ambiguous attitude towards Satan and Malak Tavus (or merely Tavus) as its so-called *avatar*.

The peacock's demonic nature is traceable even in the Old Iranian folk beliefs as attested in the 5th century Armenian philosopher Eznik's «Rejection of Heresies» (*Ek atandoc'*), where he wrote: **Orpēs ews asen fē Arhmnn asac: oč' efē č'karim aṛnel bari inč', ayl č'kamim; ew aṛ i hastatun zbann arneloy - arar siramarg** "They (the Persians) maintain that Arhmnn (i.e. Ahriman) was supposed to say: it does not mean that I am not able to make good things: the matter is that I do not want (to do good). And as a proof for his words, (he) created the peacock" (*Եզնիկայ Կողմացույ եղծ աղանդոց. Վենիսիկ, 1826, էջ 139*). In the Kurdish folk beliefs the peacock has been generally treated as the manifestation of evil, perhaps, as a result of anti-Yezidi feelings (cf.: *bi t'avûs hāra* "va au diable", - F. Justi, A. Jaba. *Dictionnaire kurde-français*. SPb., 1879, p. 274). The ambiguous character of the peacock is well attested also in European folk traditions; the "eye" depicted on the feathers of this bird, for instance, was considered as a sign of its demonic essence. The peacock's feathers were used as an accessory in black magic rituals. As the key figure of the Yezidism, Malak Tavus has been the subject of various interpretations and commentaries (see, e.g.: K.E. Müllers. *Kulturhistorische Studien zur Genese pseudo-islamischer Sektengebilde in Vorderasien*. Wiesbaden, 1967, pp. 368-373, and G.S. Asatrian, A.P. Poladian, op.cit., with further literature, etc.).

69. Cf.: W. Ivanow, op. cit., p. 41.

70. Э.А. Грантовский. О некоторых материалах по общественному строю скифов: Родственники и друзья. - Кавказ и Средняя Азия в древности и средневековье. Москва, 1981, с. 77.